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ABSTRACT

This teaching guide accompanies a series of five half-hour television programs for children 7 through 12 years of age that depict Chinese American children in a variety of situations that foster a sense of group and individual identity. The emphasis of the series is on affective learning. The following issues are dealt with: (1) the ramifications of stereotypic thinking, of ethnic and racial prejudice, and of sexism; (2) the negative results of parental pressures on a child to excel; (3) the conflict between the child's need to explore beyond the family unit and the parents' natural protectiveness; (4) the embarrassment of feeling "different"; (5) apprehension about people from a different culture; and (6) how being open about thoughts and feelings can help others understand us. The following information is provided for each of the programs: (1) a synopsis; (2) the learning goals for the program; (3) questions for class discussion; (4) a suggestion for role-playing that can carry the discussion to a deeper level of learning; and (5) background information. Suggestions for teaching Chinese American children and a description of a method of role-playing are included. (FMW)

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ED329641

Bean Sprouts

a television series about Chinese-American children

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BEAN SPROUTS

TEACHING GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

BEAN SPROUTS is a series of five half-hour programs for children seven through 12 years of age. Five- and six-year-olds, as well as families, could also benefit from the series.

The programs depict Chinese-American children from many different backgrounds—inner city, suburban, immigrant, and American-born—in a variety of situations that foster a sense of group and individual identity. Some specific problems Chinese-American children face are tackled; many of these same problems, in different manifestations, must be dealt with by all children in our society. BEAN SPROUTS takes the children's viewpoint, showing them in natural situations that are both bilingual and multicultural.

The emphasis of the series is on affective learning. Among the many issues the programs deal with are these: the ramifications of stereotypic thinking, of ethnic and racial prejudice, and of sexism; the sometimes unfortunate results of parental pressures on a child to excel; how a youngster's need to explore beyond the family unit conflicts with parents' natural protectiveness, or overprotectiveness; the embarrassment children may feel because their parents are "different" from the parents of their friends or speak English poorly, or because they themselves feel "different"; apprehension about people of a culture other than one's own; and how being open about our thoughts and feelings can help others understand us.

These underlying themes are treated in dramatic programs focusing on a group of Chinese-American youngsters at school, at home, at play, and in the community. The setting, the San Francisco Bay Area—including Chinatown, where many of the children live—portrays new Chinese immigrants, American-born Chinese, and persons of other ethnic and racial backgrounds, as they all rub shoulders in their daily pursuits.

Holidays are celebrated. The children visit local shops and markets and walk along the streets. Chinese Americans are shown in the great variety of ways in which they make their living. This kaleidoscope of Chinese-American life in all its color and richness can provide a visit to a Chinatown for those who have never seen one. It can also give people from other backgrounds insight into how Chinese Americans really live as opposed to the stereotypes that persist.

Rather than simply pinpointing problems, the programs show ways of dealing with those problems and also ways of helping others to deal with them. Essentially, they teach about the human experience. Further, they provide positive role models for youngsters.

For each of the five programs, this guide provides: (1) a synopsis; (2) the learning goals for the program; (3) questions for class discussion; (4) a suggestion for role-playing that can carry the discussion to a deeper level of learning; and (5) background information.

A WORD ABOUT TERMINOLOGY

Throughout this guide, we have intentionally used the terms "Asian" or "Asian American" to designate all persons whose origins are in Asia. First, "Oriental" bears all the overtones of a long history of Western prejudice against Eastern peoples. Using "Asian" also serves to raise the consciousness of Westerners (as have the designations "Native American" and, indeed, "Ms."), asserting Easterners' direct interest in choosing their own appellation and their claim to equality of dignity and worth with Westerners.

Using a single term to identify such a wide variety of peoples with greatly differing cultures—Chinese, Japanese, Pilipino, Malaysian, Korean, Vietnamese, etc.—may seem to deny the individuality of those cultures. However, their common experience of Western racial prejudice has taught them to make common cause in their efforts to overcome that prejudice.

ON TEACHING THE CHINESE-AMERICAN CHILD

The following brief comments are based on a very informative paper by Itty Chan, "Our Children's Culture: On Working with the Chinese-American Child."* Ms. Chan is a specialist in early childhood education and the author of several papers on the subject.

While every child is a unique individual, all children are also affected by their cultural environment. Since a child's home culture has a significant influence on that child's behavior, teachers informed about his or her background can be more effective with the child in the classroom. This is especially important in dealing with children of an ethnic background different from the teacher's, in this instance, Chinese-American children.

Most children of Chinese background are still being brought up, at least partially, according to a viewpoint and practices that originated in China. Thus, the Chinese-American child lives in two cultures, and the nature of the Chinese influence depends not only on how recently the child's family has come to the U.S., but also from what part of China, where dialects and customs differ considerably from region to region.

Whereas the written Chinese language is the same throughout China, dialects may differ so greatly that communication is only possible through writing. A person from the southern Chinese Province of Kwantung (the source until recently of most Chinese immigrants), for example, would speak one of that province's dialects and would not understand spoken Mandarin Chinese (the Peking dialect) or, say, Taiwanese. This means that two Chinese-American children in the same classroom may not be able to understand each other in Chinese.

A basic element in Chinese child-rearing is a strong and close family feeling. Children learn early to address family members by the proper kinship terms (Older Sister, for example, or Younger Brother) and to relate to them in the proper manner. Younger children are taught to respect and mind their older siblings, and the older children are protective of their younger sisters and brothers.

This strong family feeling includes a sense of mutual responsibility: the child is taught that his or her actions can bring either pride or shame to the family, and the community holds the parents responsible for disciplining and educating their offspring. Therefore, teachers may profitably use some caution in reporting to Chinese parents any problems their child may have at school, for the child might be punished more severely than his or her action calls for.

Chinese-American families have a system of multiparenting: the children are cared for not by the mother alone but also, in turn, by siblings, the father, aunts and uncles, and grandparents. Sometimes even young children must stay home from school because their parents need their help in babysitting. This means that school staff members should be willing to talk about a child with other members of the family than the parent—perhaps an aunt or grandparent, or even an older sibling.

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* *Presented at the Multi-Cultural Conference, New York City Head Start Regional Training Office, New York University, New York, N.Y., on April 26, 1979.*

Copies of this paper are available at the cost of reproduction from Ms. Itty Chan, 26 Concord Ave., Apt. 411, Cambridge, MA 02138.

The traditional Chinese respect for learning continues to be strong in the Chinese-American home; this is combined with parental aspirations that children be better educated than they themselves are and move to jobs of higher social standing. The Chinese also believe that determination, diligence, and perseverence can conquer most, if not all, difficulties. Thus, a Chinese parent might mistakenly blame a youngster for not applying himself or herself, when there is, instead, a congenital or physical cause for poor school work.

Language preference varies from one Chinese-American family to another. Some parents insist on their children's speaking their mother tongue, to preserve strong family ties. Others fear that bilingualism may slow their children's proficiency in English, although there are no grounds for such fear. It is known, in fact, that children can develop an ability to switch from one language to another with no confusion, translation, or even an accent.

Unquestioning obedience, to one's parents at home, one's teachers at school, and the authorities in society, was crucial in China during the Feudal period, to produce compliant subjects of the social system.* Parents teach obedience, less as a matter of their personal authority ("because I said so") than of the society's authority ("the way things ought to be"), and disobedience is a sign of disrespect that is not to be tolerated.

This conflicts with the contemporary American ideal of standing up for oneself and being assertive, resulting in "questionable compliance," in Ms. Chan's words. Chinese-American children must work out their own resolutions, until Chinese-American adults come to understand that questioning on the part of children is not necessarily disrespect for parents or teachers but an aspect of the necessary redefinition of relations between generations.

Forbearance, highly valued by the Chinese, means being patient and self-restrained concerning one's own desires and, on the other hand, generous and forgiving with other people. This ideal, like the ideal of obedience, conflicts with the contemporary U.S. values of competition and individualism; consequently, a youngster exhibiting forbearance may simply seem to be weak in character. The guideline for forbearance in women is even stronger: "I would rather be wronged by someone than to wrong someone," a clear invitation to exploitation in U.S. society. This conflict has no easy solutions, for either boys or girls, but, as Ms. Chan writes (page 14), "...we can start by helping children to appreciate patience, kindness and generosity in oneself and others, and at the same time to be aware that not everyone is like that and one needs to be alert and strong in order to withstand any abuses."

These cultural differences in Chinese-American children have ramifications in the classroom that teachers should keep in mind. First, Chinese-American children are not born with a quiet and compliant temperament. Rather, they are taught respect for teachers and cooperation in school, which traits may be taken for a lack of spontaneity and passivity. When a child is not actively participating, that child may be waiting patiently for a turn to begin to speak rather than to interrupt someone else.

In the second place, Chinese-American children are as independent as other children, but their idea of independence is better expressed as standing on one's own feet rather than as standing alone; that is, being resourceful and competent in what one does (taking care of brothers and sisters, doing household chores, being left at home without adult supervision) rather than being able to speak or otherwise perform singly, as in "show and tell" activities. A Chinese-American child would find it far easier to perform together with two or three other children than to take the spotlight alone.

Lastly, Chinese-American children are as imaginative and creative as other children, but they are not encouraged to fantasize or day-dream, and their imaginings are apt to be integrated with rational thinking, expressing itself in innovative ways of seeing things and putting things together instead of outright fantasy.

It is to be hoped that this summary of some cultural traits to be found in many, if not most, Chinese-American school children will be helpful to teachers in general, as well as for using the BEAN SPROUTS series in the classroom.

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* *See also Itty Chan, "Early Education in China and Its Implications in the United States" (Asian American Bilingual Center, 2168 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, CA 94701). April, 1977.*

ROLE-PLAYING

The following description of one method of role-playing, from the "Rebop Program Guide," which was developed by Alyce Sprow, is quoted with her permission.

Role-playing is a largely verbal dramatization of a character or situation (although movement, touching and other body actions are desirable). When small children play "house," they are pretending to be Mommy and Daddy. Besides being fun, this play is useful; it gives the child insight into what being a parent is like; and it helps the child express his emotions and attitudes.

For directed role-playing (rather than spontaneous, as in playing house) to be effective, it is most useful if:

- The role is different from the child's usual or natural role in life. (The person representing the "other" comes across more vividly than the person who plays "himself" because the latter is, basically, not playing a role but merely speaking for himself. Role-playing is acting—stepping outside oneself to discover what the "other" is like.)
- There is a conflict of personality, ideas or goals.
- Each player is assigned someone to be (a specific character) and something to achieve (a specific result to seek).
- The player is urged to try to understand what motivates the character he is portraying—to identify with, to "become" that character; and at the same time, to listen to and try to understand the viewpoint of the other character(s); and to be open to influence from the other character(s).
- Classroom leaders are thoughtfully cast to avoid the possibility of affecting influence through sheer force of personality. (Watch for some surprises, though—students with less dominating classroom personalities may sparkle on "stage.")

If there is a moment of conflict, the actors should be interrupted and the role-playing brought to a halt so the entire class can discuss possible solutions. The main difference between role-playing and a short play is that the former requires no plot and especially has no denouement—the action ends at a climax. While the actors are still in place, each in turn should describe his or her own feelings during the action; whether these feelings changed and if so, due to whose influence, and discuss what he or she perceived as the feelings of the other(s). Nonparticipants should then join in the discussion. Note: A student can say, "I felt..." or "It seemed as if you felt..." but never "You felt..." Thus, students are forced to attend to the feelings of others.

You will find that role-playing quickly becomes student-propelled once discussion is under way.

The characters, or roles, need not be limited to actual on-screen persons. And more than two persons may be involved, so long as either the personality, ideas or goals of each one is different.

. . . . . .

Note: Teachers may wish to write each player's name and the character he is playing on the board. It will also be helpful, when there are several players, for each to wear a nametag showing his character.

Role-playing is best limited to three or four minutes, leaving considerably more time for the discussion that follows it.

PROGRAM 1. TRY IT, YOU'LL LIKE IT

SYNOPSIS

Wei Min and some of his classmates are confronted throughout the school day by various misconceptions about Chinese Americans—on the bus, at lunch time, and during recess. They cope with this stereotyping, often with the help of friends.

In school, Wei Min and his classmates, youngsters of differing backgrounds from all over the city, are learning to read and write Chinese and studying the history of the Chinese workers on the transcontinental railroad in the 1860's.

After school, Wei Min visits his mother at the garment factory where she works. He asks to go on his class's camping trip, but she says it would be dangerous. Later, at home, Wei Min convinces his parents to let him go by drawing a parallel between their risk in coming to the U.S. and his risk in going camping.

Around their campfire, the youngsters are told a Chinese-American legend of the nineteenth century, which brings together the dragon of ancient Chinese culture (the spirit of the Chinese people) with the spirit of the many Chinese workers who perished while building the transcontinental railroad.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Students will come to understand that there is nothing wrong with being "different." It is only natural for new immigrants in the U.S. to speak their native language while learning English and to live as they did before coming here. This needs to be acknowledged and accepted by the newcomers without apprehension, and by those who were born here—or have been here for some time—without disapproval, because ethnic differences are a source of enrichment for all.

Students can also learn (from the following sequences of the program) that:

2. *The school bus.* Stereotypic thinking prevents individuals from understanding and respecting each other.

Learning a second language involves learning about the culture it expresses. Bilingualism can be a personal choice, one that opens a person to others who are different, thus broadening one's human understanding and enriching one's life.

3. *Wei Min and his mother.* Chinese Americans go through many difficulties in becoming accepted in the U.S. This can lead children to self-rejection because of feeling "different," as well as children's rejection of their parents because they are "different."

4. *At school.* Opening one's self to new experiences helps one to grow. By learning more about others, one learns more about one's self. Name-calling cuts off this self-discovery.

5. *After school.* Chinese parents new to this country work very hard in order to support their families, and for new immigrants pay is usually very low.

Chinese parents' protectiveness of their children sometimes reflects their mistrust of others because they themselves have not been accepted by the majority, but have instead experienced racial discrimination.

6. *At home.* The stereotype of the "smart Asian kid" can be fostered by Chinese-American parents who are convinced that acceptance and success for their children are more likely to come through a good education, which depends on hard work and good grades.

Most youngsters want to look like their friends and feel they look "funny" when their clothes and hair are different.

Chinese-American parents may be overprotective. They already know how hard, and even dangerous, life can be for Asians in the U.S., and they are hesitant to trust others to take good care of their children.

7. *At camp.* The story of the "Iron Moonhunter" links the dragon of Chinese legend with the historical situation of the Chinese people in this country during the last century, reinforcing the railroad workers' tragedy. The dragon in this legend is a symbol of good, and so is the dragon who dances at the head of the New Year's Day parade (Program 5).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. One reason for Luke's making fun of the Chinese language is his feeling of being left out of the game his friends were playing. What did his friends do when Luke started making fun of them? What do you do when people make fun of you or call you names?

2. When Luke grabbed the ball, stopping his friends' game, they got mad and called him "dummy." Is being called a "dummy" the same as being called a "chink" or other racial names? Why? How do you feel when you are hurt by words? Why do people use words to hurt others?

3. Wei Min suddenly stops speaking to his mother in Chinese and walks quickly away from her. Does anyone in the class have parents who speak a language other than English? How do you feel when your parents use their native language in front of your friends?

4. Wei Min's classmate makes fun of Wei Min's lunch. How do Wei Min and Luke handle it? What change do you see in Luke's attitudes from the earlier scene on the bus? Why has he changed?

5. On the playground, the teacher says, "We all sound the way we do because of what we are." What does she mean?

6. Although Wei Min's report card shows all A's but one (a B) his father concentrates on the B, telling Wei Min he must try harder. How do you feel when your parents expect more from you than you think you can achieve? Is it important to your parents that you do well in school? Why?

7. Wei Min's mother does not want him to go on the camping trip because she is afraid of what might happen to him. He feels she worries too much about him and is too strict. Do you sometimes feel your parents are too protective of you? What kind of worries about you do they have?

8. Have you ever really wanted to get to know a person who looked different from you or spoke another language, but somehow held back? Were you afraid of this person? Were you worried about what other people might think? Why? Could it be prejudice?

ROLE-PLAYING

Situation. Daniel is the only Jewish person in his class. Although the special religious days his family celebrates are important to him, he says nothing about them to his friends or classmates because he does not want to be "different" from them. His teacher, Mr. Murphy, stops him at the end of class to ask him to share with the class the historical significance of Hanukkah and how it is observed.

Character	*Role*
Mr. Murphy	asks Daniel to share his family's Hanukkah customs with the class and encourages him, realizing his discomfort.
Daniel	does not want to be different from his classmates and is hesitant to describe his family's customs at the next class session.

Outcome. What does Daniel decide to do? Why? Did Mr. Murphy's encouragement help Daniel overcome his discomfort at being thought "different" from his classmates? If so, how? If not, why not?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Plagued by a shortage of labor in building the transcontinental railroad in the 1860's, the Central Pacific Rail Road turned to the Far East for workers. At first, the Chinese were considered "too small" and were hired only experimentally; the company later realized that the Chinese could do the same if not harder work than the others. One of the most hated jobs relegated to the Chinese was placing explosives in crevices in the mountains. Short fuses meant there was very little time to be pulled up in the straw basket before the gunpowder exploded. Many died.

The Chinese workers lived in small tents, worked from sunup to sundown, and were paid a mere $26 a month. Using only picks and shovels, one-horse-drawn dump carts, wheelbarrows, and black powder, the Chinese workers built the western link of the first transcontinental railroad over some of the most difficult terrain imaginable; at one point as many as 13,000 Chinese were on the job.

Despite the railroad owners' high profits in both money and land, the Central Pacific forced the Chinese workers to carry on during the winter of 1866, one of the worst on record. Devising a tunnel network, the Chinese managed to work and live under the snow; nevertheless, the winter claimed many lives.

On June 24, 1867, between 5,000 and 7,000 Chinese railroad workers "walked out as one man." A placard printed in Chinese set forth the right of the workers to higher wages and a more moderate day's work, and denied that the company's overseers had any right to whip or otherwise restrain them from leaving to seek other employment.

To break the strike, the owners planned to bring in black labor, but it collapsed in a week. With no outside support, and already excluded from American society, the Chinese workers struggled in isolation and could not keep the strike going.

After the railroad was completed, the Chinese railroad workers remained in poverty; they went into farming, urban manufacturing, and the service industries—all for very low wages.

MYTH: The Chinese came to the U.S. to work, earn money, and then return to China. *REALITY:* While this may have been the intention of some, many had no choice. Subject to kidnapping, deception, or harsh contracts to repay the cost of their passage through a form of wage garnishee, when they arrived they were forced into the lowest-paying jobs. Returning to China was generally impossible.

MYTH: Chinese took jobs away from white people. *REALITY:* Chinese laborers, to survive, accepted lower wages because that is all they were offered. They were used by the big corporations as a threat to white laborers demanding higher wages, and as a scapegoat in times of unemployment.

MYTH: The Chinese were greedy, antiunion, and willing to take the lowest wages. *REALITY:* Most of

the jobs open to the Chinese were dangerous, or unwanted by whites for other reasons. The companies who employed them profited greatly from "cheap" Chinese labor; to escape criticism by white laborers, especially in times of depression, the companies contributed to the anti-Chinese hysteria. Through myths, images, and distortions that even predicted their takeover of the country, the Chinese were blamed for the economic crisis of white workers when, in fact, the corporations themselves controlled employment and wages. This hysteria led to many laws against the Chinese that made their life miserable. *MYTH:* All Chinese are foreigners. *REALITY:* Chinese in this country were denied the right to citizenship, the right to vote, and the right to testify against white persons in courts of law. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 banned further Chinese immigration. It took 83 years for the rescinding of this Act—1965. In 1943, a new law allowed a quota of 105 Chinese to immigrate each year, because their total exclusion had become an embarrassment: the Chinese were our allies during World War II.

PROGRAM 2. BOYS AND GIRLS, GIRLS AND BOYS

SYNOPSIS

Following a boy's taunt that "girls can't do anything," a gymnast tells how she gained enough confidence by learning gymnastics to learn to swim well, too. There are differences between male and female bodies and their capabilities, she agrees, but both can participate equally well in most sports.

The idea that men are better drivers than women is shown to be another stereotype when a man, trying to pass Aunt Julie's car, nearly hits a school bus driven by a woman.

Aunt Julie agrees to drive her nephew and his friend home after they have run a quick errand. She and a friend are waiting impatiently in her car while the boys thoughtlessly play along the streets for some time. When Julie's friend comments, "Boys will be boys," the two discuss the double standard whereby boys are treated more leniently. When the boys finally return, Aunt Julie tells her nephew that he would not have been so inconsiderate of his father, or of another male, as he has been of her.

Ann is expected by her parents to do many household chores, as well as her homework, whereas her brother Derick's primary responsibility is to study. The family later comes to see the inequities of this arrangement when the parents, recognizing that they both work to make ends meet, admit that both Ann and Derick need a good education and should share responsibilities.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Students will come to understand how various forms of sexism pervade our daily language and behavior, and how sexist generalizations and prejudices can hinder a girl's growth as a full person, as well as real understanding between boys and girls.

Students will also learn that:

2. Girls tend to accept without questioning the common stereotypes of themselves, and often do not even try to do or be what they are constantly told they cannot do or be. They need encouragement to test as wide a variety of possibilities for themselves as boys do.

3. Boys need to learn to treat others with equal respect and consideration, whether male or female. Girls can best help boys in this by consistently speaking for themselves in a reasonable manner when they feel they are being treated unfairly.

4. Youngsters can help their parents overcome sexist stereotypes by being open about their feelings and their needs.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In the program we see how boys and girls are treated differently. What are some of the differences you have noticed in the way boys and girls are brought up? Draw examples from your own family, your school, and your community center.

2. The young gymnast says basic differences in girls and boys would not prevent them from excelling in most sports. Why, then, do you think boys are better at playing such games as baseball, basketball, and kickball?

3. Suppose many people around you had always told you that you lacked the physical ability to play baseball even though you had never tried it. Would you try anyway? Would what they said affect your ability? Why?

4. What does "to generalize" mean? Here is an example: While Julie and her friend are waiting impatiently for the boys to return, the friend says, "Well, boys will be boys." What does her comment mean?

If most people you know (especially adults) agreed with this generalization, how would it affect you as a boy? As a girl? List some other generalizations and discuss their meanings.

ROLE-PLAYING

Situation. Yvonne is new in school. During gym, the team captains, John and Frederick, choose their teams to play kickball. Niether of them wants Yvonne on his team because she's a girl and she doesn't know the game. Yvonne wants to learn it but she is afraid of being made fun of. The gym teacher tells Yvonne that she can either play on John's team or watch the game this time. Yvonne has to decide what to do.

Characters	*Role*
John	rejects Yvonne because she's a girl and probably cannot play.
Frederick	rejects Yvonne for the same reasons as John.
Gym Teacher	tells Yvonne she can play as a member of John's team, or not play this time.
Yvonne	must decide whether to play kickball or watch.

Outcome. Why did Yvonne make the choice she made? Was it an easy choice? Was it the wiser choice? Explain. How did she feel when the boys rejected her?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

For centuries the women of China were educated to follow The Three Obediences and live up to The Four Virtues. The Three Obediences were: obey one's father before marriage; obey one's husband in marriage; and obey one's sons in widowhood.

The Four Virtues were: to have womanly looks; to behave according to the womanly virtues of subservience and chastity; to excel in womanly domestic arts; and to speak in a womanly manner.

According to Itty Chan, in her paper, "Women of China: From The Three Obediences to Half-the-Sky" (in, *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 1977), the education of women was for subservience to others. Further, the Confucian world view, also ingrained in girls from an early age, was a fatalistic attitude toward one's destiny. Women were not educated to think or develop their intelligence. Instead, they were brought up to be totally dependent on, and at the mercy of, the patriarchal family.

Changes in this approach began only with the founding of the first Republic, in 1911, but had its greatest impetus after the establishment of the People's Republic of China, in 1949. Even now, after the institution of the broad principle of equality of the sexes in all realms of life, the struggle to overcome patriarchal thinking and behavior goes on. Habits of centuries, especially in a strong, family-centered culture, take a long time to undo.

Chinese-American women are also attempting to overcome the centuries-old patterns instilled by education into The Three Obediences and The Four Virtues. Two current books by a young woman who grew up in California, Maxine Hong Kingston, show the inner struggle of Chinese-American girls and women as they cope with the old ways that conflict with their growing resoluteness and self-respect. One, "The Woman Warrier," is now available in paperback, published by Random House; the other, "China Men," is more recent and was published by Knopf.

Itty Chan, in another paper,* describes two specific conflicts for the Chinese-American girl. The Chinese tradition of unquestioning obedience to one's parents, one's teachers, and the authorities in society conflicts with the contemporary American ideal of standing up for one's self. For the Chinese-American girl, being assertive collides with being docile, the Chinese feminine ideal.

A second Chinese ideal, the moral value of forbearance—being patient and self-restrained about one's own desires and giving and forgiving to others—is a virtue still highly valued, especially for women, and girls must learn to draw the fine line between being generous and being assertive.

The introductory section of this guide (pages 8–13) outlines additional differences between the Chinese culture and the prevailing ideals in the U.S. that must be resolved by the Chinese-American child.

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* *"Our Children's Culture: On Working with the Chinese-American Child." Presented at the Multi-Cultural Conference, New York City Head Start Regional Training Office, New York University, New York, April 26, 1979.*

PROGRAM 3. WHAT CAN YOU SHOW ME?

SYNOPSIS

When Robert refuses to take home the fish he has caught, his friends and his brother Dan cannot understand. He finally tells them his father would think he should be doing his school work, not "fooling around."

Some of Robert's classmates distribute leaflets for Lillian Sing, who is running for a community office. They ask why she has to "show off," since people should be able to see her abilities for themselves. You can't count on people's noticing what you do, she explains; you have to tell them who you are and what you can do. This reminds two of the boys of how Robert is often left out of things because he is so quiet about himself.

Other children also find it hard to express themselves openly in class, and Robert volunteers to work with the puppets so shyly that he is passed over. But in the school yard, Robert boldly helps his friend Luke when two older boys are bothering him. Luke asks Robert later why he does not stand up for himself when he can stand up for a friend.

Robert and Dan visit their father's optometry shop. In discussing Dan's being an artist, the father makes plain his own perfectionism. Robert sees the connection between this and his hesitancy with his project. Dan says he would rather take his chances and be open about himself, accepting whatever criticism may come.

Robert decides to tell his teacher that he wants to work with the puppets, and he finally begins to express himself by speaking through the puppet he is operating.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Students will see how their behavior and attitudes often reflect those of their parents. This can be positive, but at times these attributes may cause barriers and handicaps that the young person will have to recognize and overcome.

2. Students will also see that being perfectionistic can prevent their participating with their classmates in all the opportunities school provides, instead of taking their chances and being open—even willing to fail—in order to test their abilities.

3. Being "perfect" or "invisible" are ways of avoiding rejection, or its possibility, that is, they are negative ways of dealing with being "different." Positive ways of dealing with being "different" or being one's self are shown by the girl who is not deterred from her love of opera by her friend's teasing; by the politician who speaks up for herself; by Dan, who is willing to take his chances in order to be an artist; and, finally, by Robert.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Explain the difference between showing off and telling a friend or the students in your class about a project you have done.

2. Why is Robert so unwilling to talk about himself or show others the things he makes?

3. Robert stood up for Luke against the older boys. In what way does Luke think Robert should stand up for himself?

4. Do you mind showing your math or spelling work to the class? Do you mind showing your drawings, stories, or poems to the class? Why? Is it easier to show your math than your drawings or poems? (The teacher may want to draw a parallel between this and the statement Robert's father makes in the optometry shop when he is encouraging Dan to give up art and learn a practical skill: "...my glasses either work or don't work. People pay me for them and they don't even have to like me....If you do everything just right, nobody can criticize you.")

5. How was Robert's behavior affected by his father's views? Can you think of ways in which your parents have affected the way you think and act?

6. Speaking through a puppet helped Robert begin to express himself. Do you have trouble expressing yourself? When?

ROLE-PLAYING

Situation. Tyrone, who likes art, has been spending his time after school at the community center, learning to make a sculpture from plaster of Paris. He has just finished his first piece, a whale, and takes it home to share with his mother, who is busy cooking dinner and taking care of two younger children. Tyrone excitedly shows her the sculpture, and tells her what he plans to make next. She cuts him off, complaining about his messy shirt and that he should make better use of his time. Tyrone will have to deal with his mother's response, either insisting on telling her what he wants to make next, or leaving to change his shirt, or getting angry, or any other way he feels.

Character	*Role*
Tyrone	excited about his new activity and accomplishment, wants to share it with his mother.
Mother	is very busy, and brushes off Tyrone's sculpture and plans as unimportant.

Outcome. How did Tyrone react to his mother's disinterest? Why? What feelings did her response create in him? If he had talked to his mother when she was not so busy, do you think she would have responded differently?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

MYTH: Asian Americans are the "model minority." *REALITY:* This view began to be put forth in the mid-1960's in an effort to counter the black civil rights protests by drawing an invidious comparison between the way the two nonwhite minorities had coped with life in the U.S. Asian Americans were chosen for this comparison because they were the only nonwhite people to be found in relatively large numbers in the service and professional fields. The popularization of the idea of the "model minority" by the mass media resulted in a stereotype of Asian Americans as largely professional or middle class. Pitting blacks against Asian Americans was a disservice to both. It served on the one hand to diminish, in the minds of whites, the severity of racism against blacks and on the other hand to deny the very real racial, social, and economic problems facing the larger percentage of Asian Americans who have not moved into the middle class.

MYTH: The Asian-American experience in the U.S. is a "success story." *REALITY:* True, Asian Americans have attained somewhat higher educational, employment, and income levels than other nonwhites in the U.S., but the dynamic of numbers and power is an important factor in this situation. Blacks are a greater threat to the majority in general, and in the job market in particular, than are Asian Americans. This circumstance is the consequence of the history of blacks in this country, the resultant racial conflict and great fears between whites and blacks, and the larger proportion of blacks than Asian Americans in the whole population. Because Asian Americans have been less visible, and because there are fewer of them, they are less threatening. Entrance of Asian Americans into professional fields has allowed many white employers to hire them in fulfillment of minority-hiring laws and thereby to avoid dealing with the attitudes and fears they still hold about blacks.

The irony of this situation can be seen in the following facts:

- Asian Americans were, until 1965, banned by law from entering the U.S. in any significant numbers. (These laws began in 1882 when Chinese people became a numerical threat to white people on the West Coast; at certain times, Chinese made up almost 50 percent of the labor force in California—but they were denied both naturalization and voting rights.)
- Asian Americans were conveniently called a "minority" in pitting them against black people, but not until the mid-1970's were they actually recognized as a legal minority by the Federal Government or the states, and that came only after great pressure from Asian-American activists. Even today questions are raised as to their minority status, when Federal agencies blindly accept statistics that do not reflect the whole Asian-American population.

MYTH: Asian Americans have a higher median income than whites have. *REALITY:* The process of census-taking and statistical research belies this view. The census-takers and the researchers focus far more on suburban and educated, middle-class Asian Americans than on those who live in urban ghettos. Consider the following:

- Census reports miss thousands of Asian Americans in overcrowded Chinatowns, Manilatowns, etc., who are employed "off the books" at incredibly low pay and who seldom report to unemployment offices when they are out of work.
- Census-takers often avoid the unsafe, crime-ridden tenements in Asian-American communities where the ratio of people to rooms is generally greater than three to one.
- Since many Asian Americans in the urban ghettos do not speak English and translators are lacking, accurate information cannot be gathered.
- Many urban Asian Americans, even with citizenship or permanent residency, fear answering the questions of Federal representatives, lest they open themselves to deportation. Historically, deportation was a means of controlling these communities, and neither legal papers nor citizenship were guarantees of rights against it.

MYTH: A Chinatown is the safest place in a city; Asian Americans are hard working, stay off welfare, have low crime rates, etc. *REALITY:* Such views not only conceal the true situation but also prevent Asian Americans from getting the assistance they really need. The myth springs from drawing broad conclusions on the basis of the small number of visible Asian Americans—the professionals in the suburbs, the isolated grocer or laundry person, or the business people who run restaurants and tourist establishments. Behind Chinatown's neon signs lie ghettos

where rates of hypertension, heart attacks, tuberculosis, and related health problems are two to three times that of whites.

Many Asian-American youths in these communities fear recruitment campaigns by youth gangs who extort protection money from small businesses and gambling houses. Gang rivalries for power and territorial rights put families in fear of harm and even the death of family members.

Because there are barriers to learning English, many Asian Americans are restricted to work in restaurants and garment factories in Chinatown. Even with six- and seven-day work weeks, pay is substandard and welfare is needed to supplement income. Asian and white employers alike take advantage of this cheap labor force, but unionizing is difficult because of the language barrier.

MYTH: "At a time when it is being proposed that hundreds of billions be spent to uplift Negroes and other minorities, the nation's 300,000 Chinese Americans are moving ahead on their own—with no help from anyone else."—U.S. News and World Report, Dec. 26, 1966.* *REALITY:* Such statements hide the true situation. Asian Americans are often denied minority status and therefore fail to receive Federal monies for day care, welfare, mental health, and social services. Some, believing and even taking pride in their presumed status above blacks, remain passive and quiet, internalizing their conflicts and problems in an effort to play the role as "models." However, they really only succeed in making themselves invisible to the majority, or they continue to be thought of as "foreign."

MYTH: Asian Americans are reserved, humble, passive, and patient. *REALITY:* Non-Asian Americans who accept Asian Americans as nonthreatening goody-goodies fail to open themselves to a rich history, not only of their hardship and success but also of their resistance and survival. This includes the unknown history of the Pilipino farmworkers who began the unionizing movement we know as the United Farm Workers; the 7,000 Chinese who struck the Central Pacific Rail Road; and the Japanese Americans who were sent to Tule Lake because they resisted going peacefully to the concentration camps during World War II. Asian Americans were less often goody-goody to be better than others than to survive and to improve the lives of those who would come after them—a principle not unlike that of many other Americans.

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* *From an article, "Success Story of One Minority Group in U.S." (pp. 73–76), which extols the Chinese Americans and draws invidious comparisons, e.g., "What you find, back of this remarkable group of Americans, is a story of adversity and prejudice that would shock those now complaining about the hardship endured by today's Negroes."*

PROGRAM 4. MOVIN' AROUND, MOVIN' OUT

SYNOPSIS

This program shows children beginning to explore their neighborhood and visit friends in other parts of the city. They climb the hill overlooking the city and then wander through the Italian section. Later, they watch the Columbus Day parade in which both the Italian and the Chinese communities participate. But Betty, whose mother owns a gift shop, has to work in the shop.

The shop is bursting with all kinds of Chinese objects. Betty's friends pay her an unexpected visit. A little embarrassed at first, Betty nevertheless shows them around; they try out the toys and instruments and taste the candy and have a good time.

Betty attends a kindly elderly couple who are genuinely interested in the culture the shop represents. She is teaching them to use chopsticks when a noisy tourist interrupts by sounding a Chinese gong and doing a foolish imitation of his stereotype of the "Oriental." He represents the insensitive person who ridicules the Asian peoples, lumping them together in his mind. Betty's older sister, Ellen, fed up with such lack of understanding, asks her mother to get rid of all the things he has been deriding. Her mother explains that, as a business, the shop must carry what people want to buy.

After the parade, the group visits the Spanish-speaking part of town, where they watch tortillas being made, play music in the park, and roller-skate along the busy sidewalks.

At Betty's home meanwhile, her mother is dismayed to learn that Ellen has arranged an interview for a job as a flight attendant. During the interview, Ellen is confronted with the stereotype of Chinese women. The personnel officer tries to steer her into a job as a ticket agent. But she persists and is hired as the flight attendant.

Ellen's preparations to leave home upset her mother, and the two are estranged until Betty finds a way to bring them together. Their mother finally accepts Ellen's departure, and all three recognize that Betty's turn to move out and explore life beyond home will also come.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This program can help students learn that it is appropriate for young people to want to explore beyond the family unit, but that this sometimes conflicts with their parents' natural protectiveness. Youngsters can help their parents understand them better by being open about their feelings and desires.

Students will also see how stereotypic thinking keeps people from understanding one another, leading to shallow judgments about their worth and potential.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Betty seems embarrassed when her friends first walk into the gift shop, not knowing what they will think of it. Do you think other children are also sometimes embarrassed by what their parents do? How could you help a friend overcome this embarrassment?

2. Did the tourist who struck the gong act badly? How was he different from the elderly couple learning to use chopsticks? How would you have handled him?

3. The word "curio" means novel, rare, or bizarre. Why would Chinese gift shops sometimes be called "curio shops?" Ellen feels the shop should carry only authentic goods but her mother thinks it must carry salable objects. With whom do you agree? Why?

4. During her job interview, Ellen has to deal with an employer who has preconceived ideas, stereotypes, about her abilities. What kind of a person does he think Ellen is? Do some people have set ideas about you? How do you handle this?

5. Call to mind some characteristics you attribute to a particular ethnic group. Where do you think these images come from—pictures? textbooks? television? friends? parents? relatives? How could you check their accuracy?

AN EXERCISE

An exercise on stereotyping. (To use this classroom exercise, teachers should choose an ethnic group that is *not* represented in the class, to help children go through the process of (1) recognizing what impressions they have of an ethnic group, (2) discovering where they learned those impressions, and (3) judging whether they are true or false. Children should be guided to talk about only two ethnic groups—the one chosen for class discussion and their own. Otherwise, hurt feelings could result. This exercise can help dispel some of their stereotypes about their own and others' ethnic groups.)

Ask the students to name anything and everything they know about the ethnic group you have chosen to discuss—the way they look and dress, how they speak, what they eat, where they live, what work they do. What kind of people are they—loud, quiet, shy, pushy, etc.? How did you find out about the people of this group (Italians, blacks, Chinese, Hispanics, etc.) Did you read about them, see something on television, hear about them from your friends or your family? Do you think you have a true picture of this ethnic group? Is it limited? Is it fair? Do you know enough first-hand to be able to determine what this group really is like? If not, what picture of them should you have in your mind until you really do know enough about them to form a true picture of them?

ROLE-PLAYING

Situation. Jane and Sue have been best friends for a long time, sharing many interests, including ice skating. While Sue was away with her parents, Jane obtained special passes for the two girls to the Ice Capades, which will be in town for one night only. Jane can hardly wait for Sue to come home to tell her the good news. However, when she does return, Sue says she is sorry but her cousin will be visiting her that night and they have made special plans that can't be changed. Jane is very disappointed.

Character	*Role*
Jane	tells Sue that she has special passes for the two of them to go to the Ice Capades.
Sue	explains that she has already made plans for that night, because her cousin will be visiting her from out of town.

Outcome. How does Jane react when she learns Sue cannot go to the Ice Capades with her? How does Sue feel? Will this event affect their friendship? How?

PROGRAM 5. GROWING UP FROM HERE

SYNOPSIS

It is Chinese New Year's Day and all the children of the BEAN SPROUTS series have been invited to a photographer's studio for a party before the parade. They are to have their pictures taken and to choose the pictures for their souvenir album from among their photos of the past year.

The children head towards the studio in Chinatown from all parts of the city. Various groups take in various sights along the way: Chinese groceries, a school for learning the Chinese language, a recreation center for exercise and playing Chinese musical instruments, and a Chinese candy shop. The streets are crowded with people celebrating the New Year, buying red-colored objects, plum branches, and red-and-gold good luck cards.

At the studio, the children gaily pose for the camera in the costumes they have concocted, accompanied by a song about how they are "growing up from here."

After the picture-taking, they head into an adjoining room, where they look at the photos taken during the past year, and reminisce about their good times. Each of these photos draws the viewer back into the time when it was first taken: a Halloween parade, a Thanksgiving dinner at a Chinese community center, a visit to a park. A photograph of Daniel Wang, a painter, opens into his studio. Next comes a visit to a fire house, and finally, suburban scenes of Chinese-American youngsters talking about being Chinese and how it affects their lives.

After the photographs are selected and the cake is consumed, the group dashes to the street to watch the New Year's Day Dragon Dance—firecrackers going off everywhere and the dragon and the lion dancing to the noisy beat of drums, gongs, and cymbals.

The program ends with the closing of the BEAN SPROUTS' souvenir photo album.

NOTE

Teachers may want to give a brief summary of this program *before* its showing. Because of its kaleidoscopic style, viewers may not readily grasp the larger narrative into which the many sequences and vignettes fall.

It is especially recommended that teachers read the background information that follows the role-playing for this program, in preparation for class discussion.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will gain a fuller understanding of what history really is—not just static information in a book, but also their own experience, stories from grandparents, relatives, and neighbors, and events in the making.

They will come to see themselves as important persons in a social setting that is right now making history.

They will learn that everyone in a community participates in its cultural heritage and helps pass it on to the next generation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Name a special event related to your family's heritage (for example, Thanksgiving) that your family celebrates. What traditional activities or ceremonies (for example, a turkey dinner for the whole family) does your family observe at this time? What special meaning does it have?

2. In the Chinese school, Chinese children learn their own language. Do you belong to a religious school or organization, or to a community group through which you learn more about your own heritage? How does it help you?

3. The program shows children sharing their experiences through photographs. Have each member of the class bring a photograph of a favorite relative (a brother or sister, an aunt or uncle, a grandparent, perhaps) and tell the class the funniest or saddest story about that person.

It could be a funny thing that happened when that person was the youngster's age, for example. Or it could be a story about World War II and the attitude towards Asians; or about the civil rights movement; or other possibilities, depending on the age and background of the members of the class.

In what way are these stories history? Who "makes history?" How is history passed on to those who weren't "there" to experience the events?

4. Would you like to meet the Chinese painter in the program? Why? What could you and he learn from each other? Is it true that a physically disabled person is somehow inferior? Why?

5. In their conversation about choosing friends, the children said they chose friends for reasons other than that they were Chinese. Are your friends all from the same ethnic group as yourself? What qualities do you look for in a friend? Is there any special

value or advantage in having some friends who have backgrounds different from your own? Explain.

6. If you were the only Chinese or black youngster in your class and you were constantly teased about it, could friends help you handle it? How?

ROLE-PLAYING

Eric and Thomas, two white boys who are good friends, live in the suburbs. They are studying astronomy in school and they like it very much, but find it difficult to locate the constellations in the night sky. A new family has moved into the house next door to Eric's, including a boy about their age. They see him one night looking at the stars through a telescope. They would like to join him, but he is black and they are unsure about how to approach him.

Character	*Role*
Eric	is out in his back yard with Thomas, trying to find one of the constellations of the stars, and notices his new neighbor using a telescope next door. He wants to join him.
Thomas	thinks they shouldn't try to talk with the new boy because he is "different."

Outcome. What reasons does Thomas give Eric for hesitating to make friends with Eric's new neighbor? Are these general fearful feelings? Are they the result of associations Thomas has had with blacks in the past? Are they stereotypes he has learned from others? What do they decide to do, and why?

BACKGROUND MATERIAL

Teachers should be aware of the frequent overemphasis on the Chinese New Year in children's literature and in media coverage of the celebration. Any discussion of it should take place in the wider context of an understanding of other aspects of Chinese-American culture, for example, the history of Chinese Americans in the U.S. or contemporary life in Chinese communities. The Chinese New Year is but one holiday in an entire year and does not epitomize the culture. An understanding of the symbolism of at least the foods, the colors, and the dragon dance is necessary for anything but a shallow interpretation of this festival.

Chinese New Year has been celebrated for more than five thousand years. It symbolizes the end of winter and the coming of spring. The first day of the New Year falls on the first day of the new moon after the sun enters Aquarius. On our Western Christian Gregorian calendar, it falls between January 21 and February 20.

In the household, the last few days of the old year are traditionally spent in preparation for the festivities. Homes are cleaned and decorated with red blossoms, the color red symbolizing good luck and happiness. Foods are cooked in advance; shops and markets are open all year long except for this holiday. Holiday fruits include oranges, tangerines, and grapefruit—the sphere symbolizing the unity of family and community as well as the continuum of the Ying and Yang (which also stands for the life cycle). Melon seeds and sesame seeds on cakes represent the abundance of children for the continuation of the family. Rice noodles, resembling the long white beard of the god of longevity, symbolize long life. Good luck wishes and a picture of the god of the kitchen are hung over the stove. According to legend, the kitchen god reports to heaven on the people of the household and then returns on New Year's Eve with other spirits, bringing peace, health, and prosperity for the coming year.

During the day before the New Year, families visit relatives and friends to bid farewell to the old year, and during the next few days they visit those who live further away. On New Year's Eve, incense is lighted near offerings made to the spirits. It is a time of thanksgiving for the family as they sit down to a meal together to close out the old year.

On New Year's Day children receive the "li-se," a red envelope containing money. It represents the sharing of good luck for the New Year. In many Chinatowns across the country, a parade re-enacts the story of the dragon, who is cajoled with food into cooperating to bring the community good luck.

Each Family Association in Chinatown hangs strands of firecrackers from the windows of its headquarters, along with symbolic food—lettuce and tangerines—for the dragon, who makes a show of eating it as he dances at the door of each Association's building, slowly making his way at the head of the parade through Chinatown's main streets. When the parade is over, the Martial Arts Society whose dragon has performed receives, from one of the Family Associations, a li-se containing money for the use of the Society.